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THE
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week by week

THE CATHOLIC AND MODERN LITERATURE

THOSE Catholics who are concerned with literature and the broader questions of religion and modern culture have had some reason for feeling encouraged during the last few decades. The number of twentieth-century writers, particularly among the Europeans, who have been aware of the spiritual nature of man's plight seems greater than at any other period since the Renaissance, and the compulsion which many modern artists feel toward the Church has by now been widely commented upon.

This phenomenon of a rapproachement between the artist and the Church has led to talk of a "Catholic Literary Revival." American Catholic intellectuals have been especially interested in the achievements of such writers as Mauriac, Bernanos, Hopkins, and Claudel, and it is doubtful whether their work has been more earnestly discussed anywhere than in the United States. Indeed, someone has asked what American Catholics talked about before Graham Greene came along.

The interest is understandable. Minorities long cut off from the major cultural movements of their times have reason to rejoice when one of their members enters into and transforms these movements. And the contributions which some Catholics have made to twentieth-century literature have been of the first order.

FOR American Catholic intellectuals there are certain hazards involved in this. Too much talk of a Catholic Literary Revival, too long a contemplation of Hopkins, Mauriac and Greene, may make us feel just a little too cozy. We may forget that there are some things about Catholic literary activity in the United States which are not so encouraging. We may forget, for example, that the most articulate and numerically superior segment of American Catholic opinion still feels a deep antipathy toward the overwhelming bulk of modern literature. Before we too hastily celebrate the reconciliation of the artist and the Faith abroad we must do something about removing the obstacles to such an understanding at home.

The evidence for this antipathy is not difficult to find. It is evident in large sections of the Catholic press and in certain sections of Catholic colleges. It consists chiefly in denunciation of twentieth-century literature, particularly the novel, as something which is simply sex-ridden, decadent and godless, something against which adults must be warned and from which youth must be guarded.

The attitude was stunningly summed up in an editorial which recently appeared in a leading Catholic journal: "If the sorry stew of unbelief, blasphemy, and inhumanity served up by our most distinguished literary craftsmen is a mirror of American life, then may God help us!" the writer exclaimed.

The roots of this attitude are understandable. They are a confusion of art with propaganda, and, in the final analysis, a refusal to look at the work of art in question and then judge it for what it is. For those who so dismiss modern literature, with all its evidence of real anguish and suffering, because the artist does not conform to an easy Christian orthodoxy, the major experience of modern man must remain unknown—and being unknown, how shall it be redeemed?

The scope of American Catholic thought must include the creation of the climate in which the artist's work will be received and reverenced for what it is—an existential statement on man functioning in a world from which most of the moorings have disappeared.

WHY BREAK OFF RELATIONS

IT would be a bit rough to hold candidates for political office strictly accountable for every last syllable of their prepared speeches and informal rejoinders over the course of a protracted campaign. On occasion remarks do get made out of context. Senator Robert A. Taft, however, is a seasoned cam-

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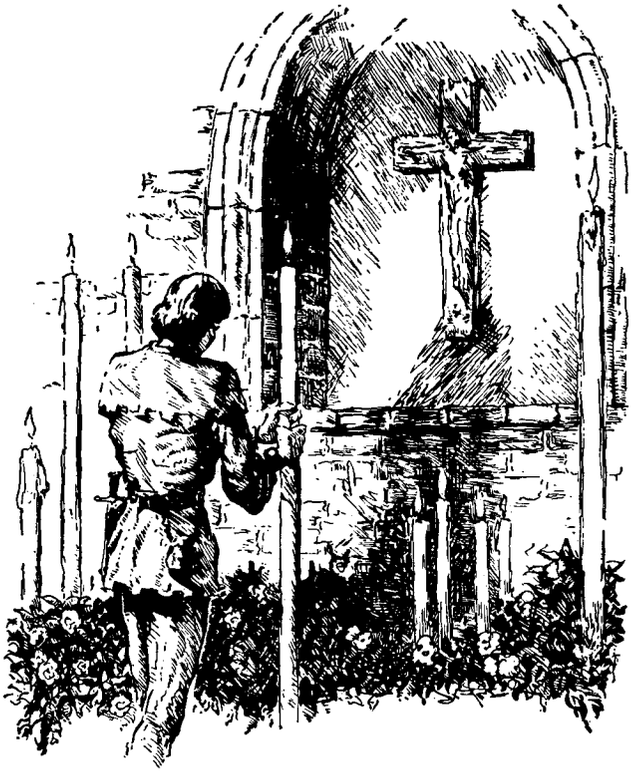

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386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1952, in the U. S. A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, $7 a year; Foreign $8. Single copies, 15c.

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paigner who appears to know what he is doing at every juncture. He is noted for his ability to think on his feet. Moreover, his foreign policy views have long been well-defined. That he should have advocated breaking off diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia in an interview that was broadcast, May 4, can hardly be dismissed, then, as a chance remark.

Senator Taft's basic reason for suggesting that the United States consider this fateful step was that under present conditions our envoys in Moscow "can serve no useful purpose." That would seem to take a lot of proving. There is no question that heavy restrictions are placed upon American diplomats who are serving in the Soviet Union; yet Mr. Taft's argument is far from self-evident.

Besides, is it not to our advantage to have a Soviet Embassy in Washington? Much of the conditioning the USSR foists upon her people depends on the distorted picture of America and other lands she unflaggingly presents. We should therefore welcome whatever opportunities there are to expose individual Soviet representatives to first-hand contact with American conditions; it increases our chances of piercing the Curtain by which the Russian people are hermetically sealed off.

The establishment—and particularly the maintenance—of diplomatic relations implies no approval of a foreign government or regime. It is simply the normal channel of communication between governments. To break off such relations is a highly provocative act. To suggest such a step at a moment when the North Atlantic Pact nations are within a year or two of setting up solid defenses is hardly the part of statesmanship. It can only strengthen the influence of those Soviet leaders who are reputed to be calling for war now, before the West is ready.

A MATTER OF TRADITION

THE majority decision handed down by the Supreme Court on the New York released time case should settle more than the immediate issue. The court found that the present plan whereby public school pupils are released from classes to attend religious instructions of their own choice was in conformity with the First Amendment and with the American tradition of church-state separation.

Justice William O. Douglas, in handing down the majority decision, wrote: "We are a religious people whose institutions presume a Supreme Being . . . When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions. For then it respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. . . . There cannot be the slightest doubt that the First Amendment reflects the philosophy that church and state should be separated. . . . The First Amendment, however, does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of church and state. Rather, it studiously defines the manner, the specific way, in which there shall be no concert or union or dependency one on the other. That is the common sense of the matter. Otherwise the state and religion would be alien to each other—hostile, suspicious and even unfriendly."

So much for the Constitutional aspect of a question that has bedeviled group relations in the United States during the last few years. Defining the Constitutional meaning of church-state separation, however, does not resolve all the difficulties. There remains an articulate group of American citizens who, for whatever reason, fear any formal public recognition that "we are a religious people whose institutions presume a Supreme Being."

It would be pleasant if all these fears were settled by the Supreme Court's authoritative pronouncement, if it dispelled their bitter antipathy to such questions as released time, federal aid to parochial school pupils, etc. But such antipathy and bitterness as sometimes get in print arise, one suspects, from feelings more deeply imbedded than a legal conviction or even loyalty to what is mistakenly believed to be an American "tradition." How to explain it?

Among the obvious elements is certainly a fear of clericalism—a hazy undefined fear of ecclesiastical power, which for many stands in direct opposition to all they have learned to revere as "progressive" and "enlightened." However dim the threat, it is very real to many people who were brought up on an idea of organized religion which was concocted almost exclusively of Inquisition horror stories and bloody sectarian wars.

Their one-sided picture of ecclesiastical influence on history reflects the very kind of limited secularist education which the released time program, among other things, may help to fill out.

Another important element is explained by those spiritually impoverished Americans who have exalted "democracy" into a kind of secularized religion. For these people the supreme value is something they call the "democratic" experience—the blurring or extinction of differences between Americans until uniformity brings about the broadest possible comity. Religious differences are a possible source of group tensions; therefore they would solve the problem by destroying religious differences, or at least by minimizing them, above all by refraining from any public act that calls attention to them. Even if religious values were not considered all-important

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by those who hold them and so not to be sacrificed with such ease, this solution would still be dubious. The genius of our democracy consists not in destroying diversity and imposing unity but of creating a political unity out of the widest diversity.

A third element looks upon religion itself as somewhat passé. These people will find Justice Douglas' dictum that "we are a religious people" an embarrassment. His insistence that the separation of Church and state in the U. S. is not absolute, will infuriate them. The plain fact of the matter is that the part of America's tradition which is religious is something they would like to forget about, for all their pious reverence for "tradition" where the separation of Church and state is concerned.

But the present defeat for these sad attitudes should not be a source of smug contentment for religious-minded Americans. Rather, they should be a challenge to religious zeal. Holding them are men and women, fellow-Americans, who stand in as much need of religious influence as we. Beyond that, the presence of such attitudes among us should spur religious groups to avoid anything that might be honestly taken to conflict with the true tradition of church-state separation. Religious-minded Americans and their churches should be in the forefront to protect the notion of religious liberty. In the true American context separation of church and state was set up to guarantee freedom *for* religion, however much misguided zealots have tried to make it look like freedom *from* religion. Let him who believes in the real tradition defend it.

TROUBLE IN TUNISIA

IT is hard to see that present U. S. policy on the Tunisian question contributes anything to our efforts to provide moral leadership for the free world. Indeed, it is difficult to see that it does anything except provide ammunition for further Soviet propaganda.

Tunisia, like most colonial areas, is experiencing a great upsurge of nationalism. French reaction to the growing demand for national self-determination has been drastic, including deposement and forced internment for Tunisian political leaders not sufficiently compliant with French wishes. But Tunisia is not without friends, and the leaders of eleven Asian-African nations have appealed on her behalf to the United Nations, charging that French action in Tunisia constitutes a threat to world peace.

To place such a matter on the agenda of the U.N. Security Council seven votes are needed. When the showdown on this issue came, only five nations voted in favor of hearing the Tunisian complaints. The United States abstained and thus in effect voted against Tunisia.

That such traditionally great colonial powers as Great Britain, France and the Netherlands should vote to keep the Tunisian complaint from being aired surprised no one. But for the U. S. tacitly to side with them on such an issue was a great blow to our prestige among the smaller nations.

Finding a satisfactory and workable policy on the colonial question and the rising nationalist tide in areas like Tunisia is not easy. Because of our own national history, the United States has always been sympathetic to the national aspirations of other people. Today the international situation has forced us to modify our traditional position.

In many areas where the nationalist tide is running highest, the irresponsibility and greed of the upper classes and the lack of education among the poor combine to make orderly self-government impossible at this time. Formerly our national policy would have been to favor self-government in any case, on the theory that the situation would in time work itself out. But today the presence in such countries of Communist-backed groups waiting only for an internal crisis to seize power makes such a policy impossible.

As a result, we now have to favor a gradual and orderly progression toward self-government, rather than any immediate withdrawal of the occupying colonial powers. But the danger of Communist coups, real as it is, does not mean that we should appear to support the long-term continuation of colonialism.

Rebuffed by the Security Council, the small nations are pinning their hopes on the U. N. General Assembly, and the Asian-African champions of Tunisia are now appealing to the countries of Latin America for support. If they gain this backing, they will be able to call a special session of the General Assembly to consider the Tunisian complaint.

Whatever the outcome of this effort, the determination exhibited by the smaller nations is an indication of the seriousness of the issue. We think the United States should reverse itself and vote to hear Tunisia. Otherwise there is real danger that the small nations will be confirmed in their growing fear that the U. N. exists only as a sounding-board for the great powers, and that would be tragic. The voices of nations like Tunisia may seem small, but they will not be easily stilled.

The Commonweal's new cover and interior design are the work of Chicago designer Annette C. Byrne, wife of Barry Byrne, noted American architect and former contributing editor of The Commonweal.

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The Tyranny of Technics

TO REJECT THE "NON-OBJECTIVE" AND THE EMOTIONAL AS "UNREAL" IS TO DESTROY THE CLAIMS OF ART

LEWIS MUMFORD

BY now every intelligent observer knows—as Mr. Arnold Toynbee, among others, has impressively demonstrated—that our civilization cannot go on indefinitely in the present fashion. Like a drunken locomotive engineer on a streamlined train, plunging through the darkness at a hundred miles an hour, we have been going past the danger signals without realizing that our speed, which springs from our mechanical facility, only increases our danger and will make more fatal the crash. If we are to find a different destination for our civilization, every part of our life must be re-examined and overhauled, every activity must undergo criticism and revaluation; every institution must seek its own renovation and renewal. Precisely in those areas where modern man has seemed most prosperous and secure, most efficient in action, most adept in thought, we begin to realize that something has been left out of his regimen, something essential to his organic balance and development.

What is that missing element? That missing element, I suggest, is the human person. Our power and knowledge, our scientific discoveries and our technical achievements, have all been running wild because Western man turned his back upon the very core and center of his own life. He has not merely lost confidence in himself: he has made his proper life insignificant, and so he finds the rest of the world equally empty of values.

More and more, from the sixteenth century on, modern man patterned himself upon the machine. Despite sentimental compunctions of various sorts, compunctions expressed in the romantic movement, in nationalism, in the reactivation of Christian theology, Western man has sought to live in a nonhistoric and impersonal world of matter and motion, a world with no values except the value of quantities; a world of causal sequences, not human purposes. Even when he has added depth to his life by his exploration of the human soul, as Sigmund Freud and his followers undoubtedly have done in psychology, he has used his new-found knowledge to a large degree only to continue the general process of self-devaluation.

Mr. Mumford has written widely as an architectural and social critic. This article forms a section of his new book "Art and Technics" (Columbia Univ. Press) which will be published later this month.

IN such a world, man's spiritual life is limited to that part of it which directly or indirectly serves science and technics: all other interests and activities of the person are suppressed as "non-objective," emotional, and therefore unreal. This decision in effect banished art, because art is one of the essential spheres of man's autonomous and creative activities. Art as the domain of symbol and form, of pattern and significance became the blighted area of modern life, within whose dilapidated mansions a few pious caretakers and family servants fought a hopeless battle against neglect and the final abandonment of the deserted homes themselves. That is why, with all our boasted efficiency of machines, with all our super-abundance of energy, food, materials, products, there has been no commensurate improvement in the quality of our daily existence; why the great mass of comfortable well-fed people in our civilization live lives of emotional apathy and mental torpor, of dull passivity and enfeebled desire—lives that belie the real potentialities of modern culture. *Art degraded, imagination denied, war governed the nations.* Thus spoke William Blake; and we have lived to understand the truth of that aphorism.

We have a common responsibility to restore order and value and purpose, on the widest scale, to human life. This means two things. We must find out how to make our subjective life more disciplined and resolute, endowed with more of the qualities that we have poured into the machine, so that we shall not equate our subjectivity with the trivial and the idle, the disorderly and the irrational, as if the only road to free creativity lay through a complete withdrawal from the effort to communicate and cooperate with other men. When society is healthy, the artist reinforces its health; but when it is ailing, he likewise reinforces its ailments. This is probably the reason that the artists and the poets are looked upon with suspicion by moralists like Plato or Tolstoy, who write in a time of decay. Though the esthetic movements of our time—post-impressionism, futurism, cubism, primitivism, surrealism—have taught us much about the actual nature of our civilization, they themselves, from this point of view, are so conditioned by the very disintegration they draw upon for nourishment

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that they are incapable, without themselves undergoing a profound spiritual change, of bringing a new balance and security into our life.

Fortunately, here and there, one still finds truly integrated artists. Survivors of a better past, percursors of a better future can in fact be found: people like Naum Gabo in sculpture and Frank Lloyd Wright in architecture; artists whose work begins once more to have fresh meaning for the younger generation. But if our life as a whole is to take on the qualities foreshadowed in the work of these artists, the world of technics itself must be transformed: salvation lies, not in the pragmatic adaptation of the human personality to the machine, but in the readaptation of the machine, itself a product of life's needs for order and organization, to the human personality.

A human pattern, a human measure, a human tempo, above all, a human goal must transform the activities and processes of technics, curbing them, when they become dangerous to man's development, even cutting them off for a while—as a more prudent world statesmanship would have cut off our present developments of atomic energy—until the appropriate political instruments and social institutions had been created for directing technics into the channels of human development. If our civilization is not to go further in the disintegration now manifested in the state of art and technics, we must salvage and redeem the Displaced Person; and that means that we must pour once more into the arts some of the vitality and energy now almost wholly drained off by a depersonalized technics.

ALREADY, by my use of the terms art and technics, I have partly defined them; but now let me make their definition a little more precise. Technics is a word that has only lately come into use in English; people still sometimes try to Frenchify it into "techniques" and thereby give it a quite different meaning. We ordinarily use the word technology to describe both the field of the practical arts and the systematic study of their operations and products. For the sake of clarity, I prefer to use technics alone to describe the field itself, that part of human activity wherein, by an energetic organization of the process of work, man controls and directs the forces of nature for his own purposes.

Technics began when man first used his fingers for pincers or a stone for a projectile: like art itself, it is rooted in man's use of his own body. But man has gone on developing his technical facilities, slowly, fitfully, only rarely in such rapid spurts as we have seen during the last century; so that by now he has extended the range and power of many of his organic aptitudes: he can kill at a distance of five thousand yards and converse at a distance of five thousand miles; and in certain complicated mathematical calculations he can, by the aid of an electronic brain, perform in a few seconds operations that might otherwise take a lifetime of strenuous effort.

All these magnified human powers are the result of human desires, human contrivances, human efforts. However formidably automatic the machine may look, there is always a man lurking in the background, adjusting it, correcting it, nursing it; and the machine itself is half slave, half god. You might in fact call the machine modern man's totem animal.

Art, in the only sense in which one can separate art from technics, is primarily the domain of the person; and the purpose of art, apart from various incidental technical functions that may be associated with it, is to widen the province of personality, so that feelings, emotions, attitudes, and values, in the special individualized form in which they happen in one particular person, in one particular culture, can be transmitted with all their force and meaning to other persons or to other cultures. Sympathy and empathy are the characteristic ways of art: a feeling with, a feeling into, the innermost experiences of other men.

The work of art is the visible, potable spring from which men share the deep underground sources of their experience. Art arises out of man's need to create for himself, beyond any requirement for mere animal survival, a meaningful and valuable world: his need to dwell on, to intensify, and to project in more permanent forms those precious parts of his experience that would otherwise slip too quickly out of his grasp, or sink too deeply into his unconscious to be retrieved.

Because of their origin and purpose, the meanings of art are of a different order from the operational meanings of science and technics: they relate, not to external means and consequences, but to internal transformations, and unless it produce these internal transformations the work of art is either perfunctory or dead. Man's technical contrivances have their parallel in organic activities exhibited by other living creatures: bees build hives on engineering principles, the electric eel can produce electric shocks at high voltage, the bat developed its own form of radar for night flight long before man. But the arts represent a specifically human need, and they rest on a trait quite unique in man: the capacity for symbolism.

Unlike animals, man not merely can respond to visible or audible signals; he is also able to abstract and re-present parts of his environment, parts of his experience, parts of himself, in the detachable and durable form of symbols. With the sounds that come forth from his mouth in childish babble, with the images that haunt him, detached from the visible world, both by night and by day, eventually with many other different kinds of sounds and images and forms and structures, man found the means of internalizing the external world and of externalizing his internal world.

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THE greatest of man's symbolic functions is of course speech; but speech, as the Danish philologist Otto Jespersen pointed out, was probably a source of emotional communion long before it became a useful instrument of practical communication. By tone and rhythm, by poetic and musical qualities, words became a special bond between mother and child, or between lovers who needed an extra outlet for their enchantment and ecstasy. Whatever primitive man may have been, he surely was not a logical positivist.

Essentially the symbolic functions begin as expressions of inner states, as an externalization and projection of attitudes and desires, sometimes in response to inner promptings, sometimes in response to the external world and its inhabitants. By the feat of symbolic representation, man freed himself from the pressing suggestions of his immediate environment, from a limited here and now. He not merely found a way of creating circuitous responses which enabled him to enlist other aspects of his life than those aroused by the immediate situation. He not merely found a way to recombine past experiences in a single symbolic representation, but what is perhaps even more characteristically human, he was able to project new potentialities for life, new experiences, which as yet had no objective existence. Art at its best discloses heretofore hidden meanings. It tells more than the eye sees or the ear hears or the mind knows. With the aid of the symbol man not merely united time past with time present, but time present with ideal possibilities still to emerge.

With the aid of the symbol, man not merely remembered the vanished past: he took in the emergent or the potential future. Beginning in dream, word, gesture, man attempts to establish a personal relationship, an I-and-Thou relationship with every other dimension of his experience. This "saying" is as important for man's spiritual development as "doing" is for his physical subsistence. Without the symbols of art, in all their many manifestations—painting and music, costume and architecture, poetry and sculpture—man would live culturally in a world of the deaf, the dumb, and the blind. It is only at a very late stage of history that the symbol becomes useful as a device of abstract thought, in the service of science and eventually of technics. The mythic and poetic functions of the symbol, as Vico long ago correctly pointed out, antedated its rational and practical uses.

Do not misunderstand me here. Not all symbolism, of course, is art. Once man had given an independent form to sounds and images, using them not merely for intimate communion but for specific factual communication, he was too intelligent not to grasp their immense practical importance in every transaction of daily life. By means of symbols, man was able to escape from the clumsy concreteness, the overwhelming multiplicity, of the immediate world.

The human mind functions symbolically, as the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead put it, "when some components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages respecting other components of its experience." That is an admirable definition of the symbolic function in general; and I would qualify it only by adding that the components that perform these functions are necessarily logical abstractions or esthetic condensations of the immediate experience.

Otherwise every symbol would have to be as large as life and therefore indistinguishable from the original experience. In other words, mere substitution without abstraction would be as boring as the habit of total recall in telling a story—and more futile.

Art, it follows, in all but its most trivial and imitative forms, is not a substitute for life or an escape from life: it is a manifestation of significant impulses and values that can come forth in no other way. Even in the oldest paleolithic cave painting, the artist reveals more to us than the fact that he had observed the bison carefully, or that he venerated it as a totem animal: he also reveals, in the very quality of his line—in its selectivity, its sureness, its expressive rhythm—something even more essential about the nature of his own experience and culture. And if a dozen anthropologists had been observing and recording his life, they could not tell us more; indeed, in certain ways—the artist's "secret"—they could not tell us half as much.

Or suppose we look at three nudes by Cranach, Rubens, and Manet: the virginal wife of the Middle Ages, the lusty bed fellow and willing mother of the Renascence, the cold, almost boyish courtesan of the nineteenth century. We find, in these condensed esthetic forms, three different ways of looking at the world, three different kinds of personality, three different philosophies: three cultures, not just three women. Art uses a minimum of concrete material to express a maximum of meaning. And if what we read into a Rorschach ink blot reveals our innermost nature, what do we not find and disclose about ourselves in the complex and deliberately evocative symbols of art?

We might say further, then, to differentiate between art and technics, that art is that part of technics which bears the fullest imprint of the human personality; technics is that manifestation of art from which a large part of the human personality has been excluded, in order to further the mechanical process. No matter how abstract art is—and even in the most realistic convention every work of art is an abstraction—it can never be entirely impersonal or entirely meaningless. When art seems to be empty of meaning, as no doubt some of the abstract painting of our own day actually does seem, what the painting says, indeed what the artist is shrieking at the top of his voice, is that life has become empty of all rational content or coherence. And that, in times like these, is far from a meaningless statement.

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The Controversy Over Chromosomes

SCIENCE seems gradually to be losing its freedom. Not only is atomic research enslaved by power politics, but even the science of genetics is more and more interfered with; power penetrates into the silent laboratories and starts dealing with fruit flies, hybrids and chromosomes. Instead of being devoted to pure research, scientific thought is being reduced to political ideology, although this is not said openly. The naive conservative resistance to many new scientific discoveries in the past centuries was child's play compared with the new deadly enemy of science: political power.

It is easy enough to realize why genetics has become one of its latest victims. The practical and economic importance of the breeding of plants and animals is ever increasing, and there is much discussion about the overpopulation of the earth. It is no use exaggerating or minimizing this problem of population: it is there and has to be dealt with, one way or another.

Before the war German geneticists were aware of the problem of overpopulation. They tried to solve it in a way which shocked the civilized world, by breeding some human beings like pigs and imposing compulsory mass sterilization on others, if not actually exterminating them like rats or bugs. The Germans had hardly lost the war when the Russians began to deal with genetics in their own way. Again the world was shocked when a rising star in the Soviet scientific sky, Professor Trofim Lysenko, informed his colleagues attending a 1948 congress in Moscow that the central committee of the Russian Communist Party approved his theories.

It is hard to imagine a more brutal form of political intervention in a scientific discussion than this. Lysenko's theories are startling from many points of view. He claims, for instance, to be able to modify the heredity of wheat by exposing the germinating seed to low temperatures and to modify the heredity of plants by grafting one kind of plant on another. Thus he substantially reduces the importance of the chromosomes as being the only carriers of heredity. Lysenko maintains that this is a confirmation of Lamarck's theory on the importance of environment in heredity, going so far as to claim the hereditary transmission of environmentally acquired characteristics. In spite of the fact that his theories met with strong opposition not only in the West, but even among his own Russian colleagues, he was so thoroughly backed up by the Communist Party that his opponents are by now practically eliminated in all countries behind the Iron Curtain.

Lysenko's theories on heredity form a large part of Communist cultural propaganda in Italy today, and his scientific adversaries in the West are called "reactionaries," "materialists who are not consistent with materialism," or, more generally, "unscientific." In many countries in Europe where the Communists are strong the Lysenko propaganda is increasing intensively, Malthus is treated as a "reactionary;" overpopulation is considered as "impossible" and nothing but a capitalist myth to subjugate the proletariat.

All this is naturally looked upon with the utmost skepticism by Lysenko's colleagues in the West and many of them do not hesitate to return the compliment and call him "unscientific." According to the prevailing genetic theories of the West, the chromosomes are the all-important carriers of heredity and the importance of the milieu in acquiring characteristics is considered as practically negligible for heredity, particularly compared with the importance the Communists attach to environment.

THIS is not the place to try to find out which of these two schools of thought is right or which is more scientific. It is quite sufficient to establish the practical consequences of both, particularly as they affect the problem of the world's overpopulation and its economic consequences. In this way some light may be shed on why the central committee of the Party in the USSR has backed up Lysenko's theories so strongly. It also throws some light on the attitudes of many Western geneticists and to a certain extent explains the bitterness of the quarrel.

It is not difficult to see what the Communists are after. The problem is familiar to everybody in the West by now. Humanity increases by roughly twenty-five million people every year; in seventy years it is calculated that it will have doubled again. Even if it is optimistically hoped that science will discover new unsuspected sources of food in areas which are now desert in order to nourish these multitudes, the fact remains that the points on the globe where the problem is already crucial are increasing.

Four-fifths of humanity now has a standard of living which is hardly worthy of human beings, at least according to Western norms, and world population seems to be increasing in direct proportion to its misery. Misery breeds Communism as surely as dirt breeds disease, and of the yearly twenty-five million new citizens of the world more than twenty millions are born to a life of such misery. In the meantime—and this is quite sufficient—the mere fact that they exist and are hungry increases the social unrest and the gap between the

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rich who are getting richer and the poor who are getting poorer. In the twenty million new potential Communists every year is another indication that for the USSR the cold war pays off.

Furthermore, the theory that environment molds all living creatures is in harmony with Communism as an ideology which aims to create a new world. The Russians always talk and write about the "Soviet man," not the "Soviet citizen," as if he were part of a new humanity altogether. Arthur Koestler has called him "the new Neanderthal man," recognizing that he is different, but a step backward instead of a step forward. Anybody who has lived in the Russian zones in Berlin or Vienna and who has been able to watch the Russian occupiers and their families from day to day, is in a position to agree on the sickening feeling of being in the presence of fellowmen as different as if they came from another planet. They are really a new humanity sculptured by environment.

IT is obvious that the Russian geneticist following orders from above cannot be compared with the geneticist of the West, where science is free. It is even difficult to speak of a Western school of thought, because there are several schools of thought. But there are certainly elementary trends which unite the majority of the geneticists of the West and on which they agree. As far as can be judged from the favorable critiques made of it by most geneticists in Western Europe, a book like Robert C. Cook's *Human Fertility* is fairly representative of these.

In this book Cook, who disagrees violently with Lysenko, is unable to propose any other cure for the menacing overpopulation than a broad propaganda drive for birth-control, before it is too late. But at the same time he recognizes that at the present stage of science, there doesn't exist any contraceptive or other means technically simple enough to have any chance of being accepted by the primitive fast-breeding four-fifths of humanity. Independently of any ethical consideration and independently even of the technical side, any interference with normal procreation among these people spoils the only pleasure still left to them in their miserable existence. The logical conclusion is that other means have to be adopted, if something is going to be done.

Mr. Cook mentions repeatedly the abortion clinics in Japan and the voluntary requests for sterilization among the women in Puerto Rico, but at the same time he recognizes that human fertility is surrounded by a superstitious veneration, particularly among these primitive people. If voluntary sterilization is an exception even among highly civilized people, how should the more primitive part of humanity be convinced to ask for it? The conclusion is left to be drawn by the readers: either it is as impossible to prevent humanity from increasing at the present rate as to stop the movement of the earth or something more drastic has to be done. Abortion clinics? Or compulsory mass sterilization, at least of the unfit?

Those who are called unfit come into the picture when the author proposes a birth limitation not only as far as quantity but even as far as quality is concerned, utilizing the ordinary tests to determine the intelligence quotient of the prospective parents. People would then be classified as "fit" or "unfit," as "desirables" or "undesirables." He could not deny more emphatically the influence of environment; on that point particularly he takes exactly the opposite position of Lysenko. And in the book he cites the way in which animals are bred as an example of how the human race ought to be improved.

THERE is no doubt that overpopulation is a problem, particularly for that happy fifth of humanity, the Western peoples who have reached a decent standard of living and who increase each year less than five million. This happy fifth is like an island of prosperity in a sea of misery. It is natural for it to feel strongly the menace of the other four-fifths of primitive humanity, which is already knocking at the gates of Canada, the United States and Australia. It is natural that the lucky fifth wishes to conserve and perpetuate its prosperity and check the menacing increase of the other fourth-fifths. That is the background for certain polemic conclusions of such Western geneticists as Mr. Cook. If the wealth of the happy fifth were divided equally among the primitive four-fifths, this would solve the problem for a long time, but for the happy fifth it would mean economic ruin. That is why overpopulation is exaggerated in the West and denied by the Russians, who are organizing the primitive four-fifths against the happy fifth. Power politics is interfering with genetics on both sides.

Cook mentions with evident satisfaction what has been done in highly developed countries like Canada and Sweden in order to tackle the problem, but he doesn't say a word about the highly developed country which has done more than any other in this direction: Nazi Germany. This omission is obvious and most surprising, because a scientist ought to be objective enough to recognize scientific achievements wherever they come from. His silence on Nazi Germany with its breeding of human beings like pigs or its compulsory mass sterilization of "undesirables" and "unfit," including Jews and Communists, is ominous. It is ominous because the difference between what he suggests and what the Nazis realized is only a difference of degree and terminology.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

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THE STAGE

CANDIDA

THIS newest production of George Bernard Shaw's comedy does not suffer from Olivia de Havilland's simpering, schoolgirlish performance alone. It is one of the worst all-round jobs ever to have been visited upon a major playwright, uncanny in its ability to make the tart Irishman seem a blundering bore.

Long before Miss de Havilland has come on, the venture has betrayed its sodden ineptitude. Pamela Simpson has turned the juicy role of Prossy, secretary to the Reverend James Morrell, into an arch and artificial low-comedy joke. Ron Randell—who would seem to be the nearest thing to a competent actor in the company—has indicated his inability to grasp the Reverend's engaging pomposity. Frank Leslie has turned the assistant curate, Lexy, into a total blank. And Bramwell Fletcher, whose debut as a character actor was rather nicely brought off in last season's "Getting Married," has given Candida's father far too garish, opulent, and obvious a treatment.

When Miss de Havilland does come on she brings pertness rather than poise, frantic anxiety rather than easy command, to the role. The stage does not settle around her, as it must if the play is to have any meaning; instead, the wisdom and complacency of the character is frittered away in a series of breathy ejaculations, darting movements, and elaborately superficial readings. Miss de Havilland is not the worst of it, though—Marchbanks has yet to appear. And Terrance Kilburn, intolerable in the part, thrashes about the stage as though Shaw had been utterly serious, and incredibly foolish, in his portrait of an obtuse young poet.

It is inconceivable that an entire company should have managed to find, and to sustain, so perfect a level of heavy-handed witlessness all by itself. *Someone* has master-minded this. The blame can probably never be fixed, though; two different directors have had a hand in it at one time or another, and there were undoubtedly long stretches of playing—the company toured for some months before coming in—when there was no official direction at all. The mystery, then, belongs to the ages; but it is a humdinger. At any rate, whatever was charming, witty, gracious, winning, or even endurable in the play Shaw wrote has been systematically, and altogether successfully, beaten to death. (*At the National)*

TO BE CONTINUED

WILLIAM MARCHANT probably intended one of those insouciantly amoral comedies in which a man's mistress is seen to be as wifely as his wife, and in which wife and mistress turn out to be pleasantly companionable. I say "probably" because every once in awhile during the course of the evening Mr. Marchant goes sober on us and gives the impression that he is half-serious—in what is called a "human" sort of way—about the whole thing.

Unfortunately, Mr. Marchant sly and Mr. Marchant sober are equally dull. The light-hearted passages are without wit; and the straight-faced dialogues—notably one in which the wife recounts the sacrifices of her long suburban life—simply break the back of the irreverent joke. Dorothy Stickney, Luella Gear, Jean Dixon, Mary Gildea, and Neil Hamilton are personable players, but the weight of Mr. Marchant's prose is upon them and it is not surprising that they are barely able to hoist themselves from their various couches. (*At the Booth)*

WALTER KERR.

THE SCREEN

THE FRENCH MARRYING KIND

FROM France has just arrived the kind of a little movie that we seldom make in this country. In the first part of "Edward and Caroline" we see an attractive young married couple fussing around their apartment; he, a very fine but unrecognized pianist, practices for a while, then lays out his evening clothes for the party they're going to that night; she starts getting ready, frets over her dress and the absence of a corsage. Their preparations are delayed when the concièrge arrives with a guest and Edward must play for them. They are delayed still more when Edward cannot find his white vest; Caroline phones wealthy uncle (who is giving a soirée that evening so his influential friends can hear Edward play) and arranges for Edward to borrow a vest from her cousin. When he returns tense and hurried he is further upset because she has re-styled her dress and he thinks it looks silly. They quarrel. She is angry and throws things. He loses his temper and slaps her. She cries and threatens divorce. And he storms out to the party alone.

The party, in the uncle's fashionable and handsome apartment, is one of the most subtle and satirical exposés of the upper-crust I have ever seen in a movie. Jacques Becker, who directed the first part of Annette Wademant's script at a leisurely pace, strikes out during the party scene and gives the whole episode a frothy glitter of artificial sophistication. The beautifully-gowned "smart" women, the bored or ineffectual men, the trivial small talk, the superficial morality, all are contrasted with unspoiled Edward.

This French film is expertly acted, with Daniel Gelin

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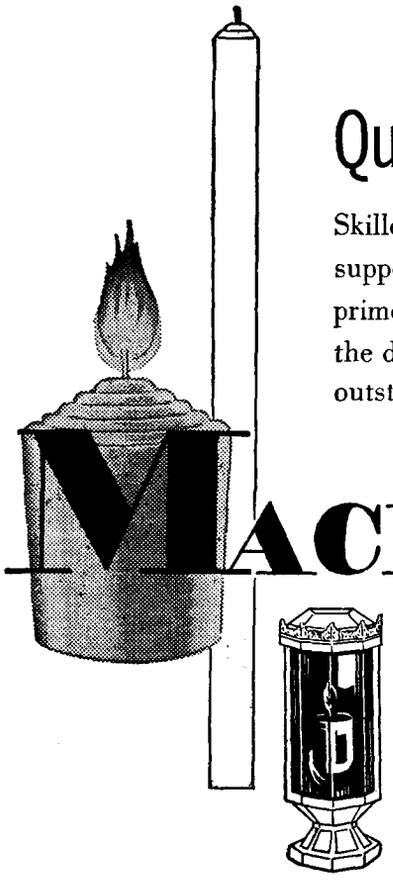
and Anne Vernon in the lead roles, and a fine supporting cast who make the party scene cruelly real but not a burlesque. The main difference between "Edward and Caroline" and similar Hollywood movies (e.g., "The Marrying Kind") is in its adherence to realism and willingness to dramatize at full length what would have been only a minor episode in the more pretentious American product. The very ease with which it is played and the apparent slightness of its material give "Edward and Caroline" its charm.

AN EXAMPLE of the kind of simple film that Hollywood makes well but often smothers in sentiment is "Belles on Their Toes." A continuation of "Cheaper by the Dozen", it goes on with the story of the Gilbreth family after father's death. Its crowded plot is concerned with the struggles of mother (Myrna Loy) who was also an efficiency engineer but had quite a time to make ends meet by giving lectures and teaching classes. However, make ends meet she somehow did, and most of the film is visualized as a flashback to the college graduation exercises of her eleventh child. Much of this flashback is also taken up, of course, with the doings of these eleven youngsters who elected to stay together rather than be parceled out with more affluent relatives. There's a lot of homey stuff about meals and the running of this big household—with Hoagy Carmichael presiding as handy man. Hoagy's voice in a couple of song-and-dance numbers is a little better than one usually gets from a handy man in real life; but perhaps that is typical of the whole film: the material of its story is realistic but everything is a touch rosier and slicker than life itself.

ANOTHER film that really tries to be unpretentious and succeeds in a simple way is "Talk About a Stranger." It's considerably helped by David Bradley's good direction of an unglamorous cast, with George Murphy and Nancy Davis as the parents of little Billy Gray. This happy family live in a small town in California where George grows oranges. Their calm is considerably upset when the mysterious house next door is bought by an even more mysterious stranger. Then when Billy's dog is poisoned, the boy is sure that their new neighbor is responsible; and the awful thing Billy does to even the score boomerangs on his father and teaches all concerned a frightening lesson. Actually "Talk About a Stranger" gets pretty moralistic, but it manages to work up some good cinema, and the shots of orange growers working overtime to keep their crop from being ruined by the frost are excellent.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.



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TIERCE: FAITH

FOR Christ's sake, help me pay the cost
This losing battle never lost
Puts cheapened heart to, tricky sense,
Shilled mind in its incompetence.
I have been sick these three years past
With want of greatness and time's haste;
The bastard's pride, the semen's rage
Have made me old before my age,
And now I see before me long
The shadow I saw behind me, young.

SEXT: HOPE

CAN it be in all this beauty
Love is nothing but a duty?

So many came, who never went,
To this peaceless tenement,
My disreputable heart,
I cannot tell their eyes apart,
Or what they ask me as they pass,
Now this hard sun shows up glass,
Shows up brick I thought withstood
Summer and time and neighborhood.

I can no more hold out. And you,
Have I not been, as I could, true?

NONE: CHARITY

HORSE—
Marten, crippled queen,
Lost in the green
Defeat of baffled flowers,
There can be no more divorce,
So little is now left we once thought ours.

VESPERS: DISCIPLINE

LET the rich take refuge in extravagance;
We who have nothing can't stop there.
The last humility's like arrogance:
It's simply not to care.

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Brothers, I know, and no man more,
The violent pity of poor for poor . . .
There is no one in this city
Can release you from that pity.

COMPLINE: DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

AND have you waited all this time to come,
That I might not go with you unbefriended?
I am not yet what he desired I become.
I thank him for his patience though it is ended.

But, welcome, sister; for the heart must soften
Remembering all it thought it could attain.
We who have met so tellingly, so often—
We will not meet again.

COMMUNICATIONS

CATHOLICISM OF JOYCE

Ithaca, New York

TO the Editors: I have just seen the survey by Sam Hynes of "The Catholicism of James Joyce" (THE COMMONWEAL, February 22nd), which is in the main an excellent appraisal of Joyce's reactions to Catholicism and of the impact of Catholicism upon his fiction. With Mr. Hynes' portrait of the artist as an apostate there can be little dispute, but there is, I think, not only room but also need for a filling out of his reading of *Ulysses*.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that it would take a Jesuit to understand all Joyce's theological references, though perhaps all of the implications of that remark do not appear on the surface. It is not only true that Stephen rejected the Church; he has rejected the Church that Jesuits taught him (with all the implications, for a religious Irishman, of the inseparability of Church and state, and all the consequences of the Church's role in the Parnell affair), or rather he has rejected the Church as he saw it through the eyes and teaching of Jesuitism. And as Mr. Hynes rightly observes, "though Stephen has rejected the Church, he has not escaped it. His habits of mind are Catholic still; 'you have the cursed jesuit strain in you' . . ."

But when Mr. Hynes continues: "Catholicism therefore appears in *Ulysses* as texture—as metaphor and symbol—rather than as structure, as a habit of mind rather than as belief . . .," it is here that I depart from his interpretation: for one misses Catholicism, or elements of it, as structure, as belief, when one sees and reads the novel (as he seems to) so largely in terms of or through the characters.

At the lower level Stephen's habit of mind is only a

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paraphrase or a relict of Catholicism, and Buck Mulligan's a parody of it. But at a higher level—which in earlier days might have been called the tropological though in modern times we might be asked to look at it (in terms of *executive technique*) as one of the forces controlled though not explicitly stated by the novelist—charity emerges as one of the key meanings or forces of the novel; and in terms of charity, Catholicism is more than texture and is a part of the structure of *Ulysses*. Indeed, rather than saying that the result of Joyce's rejection and *non serviam* is "Catholicism with the religion squeezed out," I think that we might more accurately say that the result in *Ulysses* is an attempt to reconstruct Catholicism as a religion with the Church squeezed out.

This interpretation can only be suggested, for there is not space here to attempt to demonstrate it; a full reading of *Ulysses* is at best nearly impossible, because of the highly dense texture and the interlocking symbols and allusions, and there is only a fairly general agreement on the structure as a whole (few go all the way, for example, with some recent elaborate and contrived discussions of Black Panthers, liturgical parodies, and the like) but I shall briefly state my view, running the double risk of distortion by over-simplification and summary and of exaggeration by presenting the part for the whole.

Tension there is in *Ulysses,* to be sure, and the vortex of the conflict is in Stephen's mind and soul, though the nature and resolution of that conflict is less clearly stated than in *The Portrait*. But Stephen, after criss-crossing Dublin and the path of Bloom, does finally find his symbolic father in Bloom, who is the outcast in an alien city. But Bloom is more than a symbol of the eternal wanderer, of everyman in exile and the exile in everyman, for he possesses charity, though it is the Pauline charity reformed in the Joycean smithy. And in the late medieval statement of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* we find this charity fused with the Father and Son concept that so attracted and tormented Joyce: "The Holy Spirit, or charity, springs symbolically from the Father and the Son, so that man, the image of God, is thereby inspired to charity."

IN all the populace of Dublin Stephen finds charity nowhere, except when he meets Bloom. The streets intersect and fill with fellow-citizens whose paths cross, but there is no real communication between human beings. "There is no communication between father and son, no intercourse between husband and wife. . . . Bloom and Stephen would lose half their poignance if they had any reprieve from the soul's incurable loneliness." (Levin, *James Joyce,* pp. 131-2)

In one sense Bloom is the agent in the meeting of the Old Testament and the New in Joyce's novel; Buck

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Mulligan, we recall, begins the novel, and the name is important: *Malachi,* the messenger of God's covenant, the end of the Old Testament; and the subject-matter of the first book, we recall, is theology. To the question of why Joyce made a Jew his hero we have several possible answers, but one is provided by Victor Bérard's theory of a Semitic origin of the *Odyssey,* for as Harry Levin has said, Joyce "identifies Bloom with an even more ancient mariner, and links Homer with the Bible."

From the time he manages to get Stephen out of the brothel and tries to look after him in the argument with the British privates, only Bloom cares for Stephen. He is then left alone with the prostrate figure of Stephen; this (again Levin) "is the moment of Bloom's epiphany." And as Stephen has identified himself, in his sin of pride, with Satan, Bloom is identified with Jesus Christ:

> His ultimate epiphany is the manifestation of God Himself, the coming of the unrecognized Messiah, whose Christian charity can only prove a source of embarrassment in this world, can only lead him . . . to be crucified again. . . .

As Stephen recognizes (when Bloom retells his happenings),

> *Christus* or Bloom his name is, or, after all, any other, *secundum carnem.*

For Catholic readers Joyce's heresy is double: first, that like Stephen one must submit oneself to all the temptations of thought ("totally in the dangerous element to immerse"); and second, that like Joyce one must submit to all the temptations of language.

We recognize with Professor Levin that *Ulysses* is not so rich in psychological insight as in technical brilliance, and as Levin has so penetratingly written:

> the burning intensity of Joyce's own creative effort animates the statuesque coldness of his creations. It beats down, like an aroused volcano upon an ancient city, overtaking the doomed inhabitants in forum or temple, at home or at brothel, and petrifying them in the insensate agonies of paralysis.

However we must recognize more explicitly, I think, the nature of Joyce's beating down, and the cause of the paralysis. *Ulysses* is a condemnation of the spiritual aridity of the inhabitants of an earthly city, a June 16, 1904 representation of Augustine's Babylon (is it mere coincidence that Joyce's middle name was Augustine?), a Babylon whose dwellers are indeed doomed to the insensate agonies of spiritual paralysis—there is the bitterness of Joyce's condemnation (in which the Church so largely figures because of its failure, in Joyce's eyes, as an agent and an organization for spiritual needs), there is the *saeva indignatio.* And only Bloom, I think, gives any sense of awareness of that charity which can beat back the cold and which can redeem the individual from the doom that threatens the entire city.

R. J. SCHOECK.

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Baroque Art And Poetry

MARTIN TURNELL

IN *The Lost Childhood* Graham Greene discusses Richard Crashaw. "Crashaw's style," he writes, "if it occasionally has the beauty of those 'marble plains,' is more often the poetical equivalent of the shop for holy statues; it has neither the integrity nor the emotional purity of Herbert's and Vaughan's."

This is a severe criticism; but whether we agree with it or not, it must be recognized that it raises issues which go beyond the value of a particular poet. It draws attention to the modern religious poet's tendency to compromise with the spirit of the age which had lasting consequences for European poetry. It is from this point of view that I wish to examine Crashaw's work and to do so it must be seen against the background of his age.

We are often told that the Renaissance marked the emergence of the individual and that it discovered the external world. In its early stages it was a religious movement which aimed at a *reformatio animae,* but it lost its religious character. There was a change from a theocentric to an anthropocentric world. Man saw himself as the center of the universe, and he tried to realize his potentialities outside the medieval religious framework. Whatever we may think of the ultimate consequences of this movement, it is undeniable that it released an immense current of vitality and that it was one of the golden ages of European art. Men turned their backs on the austerity of earlier ages and set to work to glorify man and the visible world in which he found himself.

This shift clearly presented religious people with a serious problem. What in fact was the attitude of the Christian to be towards the new humanism? He naturally disapproved of it in so far as it was pagan, but he could not be blind to its positive virtues. The Church has always claimed that she can assimilate anything that is good in other systems. That is what the artists of the Baroque period attempted to do. They tried to harness the vitality released by the Renaissance, and it does indeed become almost tangible in the immense angels of Baroque sculpture and the flying draperies which envelop its saints.

THE readiness to accept, to assimilate, to transform is reflected in the differences between medieval and Baroque art. In a medieval work like the carvings at Chartres the emphasis falls on two themes—Creation and Incarnation. The men who made them could not omit all reference to the "sorrowful mysteries," but it is confined to a glimpse of the foot of the Cross and a couple of nails on one of the porticoes.

It is not until the seventeenth century that the Crucifixion becomes the center of religious art, that poetry and painting drip with the Blood of Christ and the martyrs. Now the Counter-Reformation made one distinctive contribution to religious art. The brilliant, ornate churches, the statues of saints swooning in ecstasy with distorted features and writhing limbs, the poetry where an immense exuberance threatens to burst through language, was the last conscious attempt to hold the balance between spirit and flesh. It was intended not merely to startle and impress, not merely as a protest against the gloomy iconoclasm of the Protestant North, but to attract the unbeliever into the gay fantastic churches to marvel, in the hope that he would remain to pray. It was an extraordinary performance certainly, but it was the product of a divided Europe. We feel already that the artist had an ax to grind, that he was trying to prove something.

He was trying to prove something, but not by argument or the methods of the Schoolmen. He was trying to put across an experience which would *compete* with the humanists on their own ground. He was also using them as allies in the struggle against Protestantism and the Lutheran view of the consequences of the Fall. In its discovery of the Natural Man, the Renaissance had insisted on the pleasures of the eye and ear, the senses of touch, taste and smell. It wanted to satisfy the senses which seemed to have been starved by medieval asceticism. The Baroque artist tried to do the same thing through religion, tried to create a Religious Man who was far nearer to the Natural Man of the Renaissance than to the medieval ascetic.

IT it not surprising that men living in a period of religious upheaval should be preoccupied with sin and suffering, that their minds should be dominated by the figure of the suffering Christ rather than by that of the glorious Christ or the triumphant Christ. Yet it would clearly be untrue to say that the seventeenth century was exclusively occupied with suffering, and the paintings and statues of saints in ecstasy are there to prove the contrary.

The answer lies deeper than that. The artists discovered that representations of suffering, ecstasy and death were much better calculated to serve their purpose. They could be made to appeal to the senses; they could be represented not merely in words, but in paint and stone.

Mr. Turnell is a leading British critic whose latest book is "The Novel in France."

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The first result was the tendency of the different arts to merge into one another, to approximate the visual arts. In the middle ages sculpture had on the whole been formal; it had shown the Christian Saint rather than a particular saint. In the seventeenth century it became highly realistic. The sculptor tried to represent movement, to probe into a man's deepest and most intimate experiences, to catch and hold the actual instant of ecstasy as Bernini did in his Saint Teresa or his Blessed Ludovica Albertoni.

All this is true of the poetry of the period, particularly of Crashaw's. It is extremely rich in visual, concrete, physical images. Not merely one, but all five senses are solicited on every page, almost in every line. In his rendering of Aquinas's *Adoro te devote,* for example, we read:

O soft self-wounding Pelican!
Whose brest weepes Balm for wounded man.
Ah this way bend thy benign floud
To 'a bleeding Heart that gaspes for blood:
That blood, whose least drops soveraign be
To wash my worlds of sins from me.

Aquinas' *Pie pellicane* is transformed into a "soft self-wounding Pelican" which does not merely bleed, but "weepes" blood for another wounded, bleeding heart which "gaspes" for still more blood.

I think that the Baroque artists must have known that they could not communicate the actual vision of the saint in ecstasy or describe what happens at the moment of death; but they knew very well that ecstasy and death had marked physiological repercussions. They tried by a realistic representation of the physiological aspects to get as close as possible to the content of experience. This seems to explain the peculiar position of the image in Crashaw's poetry.

In the finest work of Donne, Marvell and Herbert there is complete correspondence between the image and its object or between the image and the emotion for which it is a vehicle. The image is not there for its own sake; it is not used for ornament or decoration; it is an integral part of the experience. In Crashaw we have the impression that attention has shifted from the experience to the image, that *the image itself becomes an object of contemplation.* We can even go so far as to say that the image precedes the emotion and is used to generate it. That is why his poems so often take the form of prayers, hymns, invocations and meditations on the great Christian mysteries or on incidents from the Gospels and the lives of the saints.

Christian mystics from the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* in the fourteenth century to Saints Teresa and John of the Cross had repeatedly warned their readers against extravagant devotion, against undue preoccupation with images and against straining after visions. These warnings were timely and necessary. Crashaw's reliance in a poem like *The Tear*

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"What is the twilight of this absolute? It is the time when the sciences have become the dust of things, when art has become a bigger queen, when religions have been reduced to poetical fragments, and when all of a culture is reduced to a fragment, to a hint. It is the present time. . . . The future is the heir of the visions of that part of its apocalypses, curses and chants. But it is an heir which cannot use its inheritance, as the modern artist can no longer recolor the past."

—SERGE HUGHES in The Commonweal
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on something which came very close to free association exposed him to obvious dangers and, one feels inclined to add, temptations.

Crashaw's method of composition possessed undeniable virtues. His baroque images are ingenious and entertaining; there is a genuine fervor in his poetry which is often impressive; but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that free association and the lack of intellectual control which it implies is something of a weakness in a poet. It involves a more and more determined appeal to the senses in the attempt—the impossible attempt—to reach *through the senses* something which lies outside the field of sense-perception.

THIS brings us to the difficult and delicate question of the erotic element in Crashaw's poetry. On this point, Dr. Mario Praz—a shrewd but by no means wholly friendly critic—has expressed himself on the age of the Baroque with some force:

> Since sensuality and eroticism were the dominant notes of [its] psychology, it is natural that the cult of the saints should have assumed an unheard of intensity, not only because it offered in the majority of cases a devout pretext for lascivious descriptions, but also because the mind could not do otherwise than translate into religious terms the same interests and feelings that moved it on the terrestrial plane: their experiences belonged to the sphere of the sensual and the greatest ideal force to which they could pretend was a spiritualization of the senses (*Secentismo et Marinismo in Inghilterra,* Florence, 1925, p. 147).

I do not think that anyone will challenge the view that the tendency of the baroque artists to exasperate the different senses, their striving after raptures which seemed to satisfy simultaneously all five senses and their meditation on religious images—particularly those depicting the Crucifixion or martyrdom—frequently excited erotic feelings. The discovery that desire may be aroused by objects which appear to have no erotic appeal is not a new one. Saint Teresa refers to it in some letters discussing the problem raised by certain ecstatics at Holy Communion. The phenomenon has of course been studied by modern psychologists, and an eminent moral theologian has described the aphrodisiac properties of the smell of certain kinds of cheese.

It is easy to find evidence for Dr. Praz's verdict that Crashaw's poetry is permeated by tender, feminine voluptuousness, that it exemplifies what he calls a "spirituality of the senses." The poet is fond of using words with directly erotic associations like "soft," "breast and "nest." The image of the "nest"—whether it be a "warm nest," a "perfumed nest" or a "rosy nest" —is a recurrent one. We may suspect that it was in part a memory of Little Gidding where the Anglican

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community lived in a warm, cosy intimacy and where one of the relationships seems to have been of the kind that the French classify as an *amitié amoureuse*. When he makes wounds "weep," he exhibits the tendency to strain the senses to the uttermost by fusing two activities into a single image.

This tendency is not confined to isolated words or images. The poem on the Circumcision called *New Year's Day* is an extreme example of his approach:

> Rise, thou best & brightest morning!
> Rosy with a double Red:
> With thine own blush thy cheeks adorning
> And the dear drops this day were shed . . .
>
> Of all the fair-cheek't flowers that fill thee
> None so fair thy bosom strowes,
> As this modest maiden lily
> Our sins have sham'd into a rose.

The most startling example of all, however, is tucked discreetly away among the *Divine Epigrams*. It is the epigram on the text, "Blessed be the paps which thou hast sucked:"

> Suppose he had been Tabled at thy Teates,
> Thy hunger feeles not what he eates:
> Hee'l have his Teat e're long (a bloody one)
> The Mother then must suck the Son.

I do not propose to follow Mr. Empson in his discussion of incest motifs and fetishism, but Crashaw's perpetual oscillation between the opposite extremes of experience does seem to me to be significant. He is continually moving towards the contemplative heights, but we who watch him from outside perceive that the way really leads downwards to an ecstasy of a very different kind, an ecstasy whose nature was no doubt concealed from him but not from us.

In the essay on Crashaw from which I have quoted, Dr. Praz seems to imply that the presence of the erotic element in literature is necessarily somewhat disreputable. I do not myself share this view, but I think that it was undoubtedly a weakness in Crashaw's own poetry.

What I do wish to emphasize, however, is the danger of compromise, the danger of trying to incorporate into religious art "the dominant notes" of the psychology of the age. For Crashaw simply satisfied at a comparatively high level the same illicit desires which today are satisfied by the manufacturers of "holy statues"—the horrible images of the Sacred Heart which disfigure too many of our churches and convents—at the lowest possible level.

BOOKS

A Gloomy Public Service

ANOTHER KIND. By Anthony West. Houghton Mifflin. $3.50.

By SEYMOUR KRIM

MOST of us know Anthony West for his *New Yorker* book-reviews—urbane, chatty, perhaps a little on the slick side. We might have expected a similar kind of novel from him. But Mr. West's second book is a curious affair, quite unsophisticated except for patches of the style, and very gloomy. It is not a success as a novel, but it does show that Anthony West is after more difficult game than one would guess from simply reading his reviews.

The book is an odd combination of D. H. Lawrence and the more futuristic of science fiction. It opens with an intense love affair between a married architect and a prostitute, the man wanting to shake off the ennui of marriage and children, and the girl seeing the possibility of a decent life for the first time. The architect, Walter Jackson, deserts his family and takes the girl to live with him at a small country mill. But the two are soon joined by the wife—who does not want to give up her husband without a fight—and their two children. Thus we have a rather novel *ménage à trois*, surprising, but handled with a decent desire not to shock and made almost convincing by West.

It is at this point that the book falls apart. The author introduces a general strike in England which leads with unbelievable suddenness to the Third World War. West's characters are trapped in this catastrophe, and each reveals his true colors in a different way. In the end the prostitute is the heroine and sole adult survivor.

This last half of the book seems tacked on to the first part without regard for logical development. The tone of the earlier part—some of it quite tender and lovely—is almost ruined by the raucousness of the last section, and I am surprised that West or his editors let the book's final version rest in this botched condition. In spite of this the novel does show the author as a man deeply disturbed by modern life who has not tried to write a prettified little story of domestic passion but rather a novel which has a larger relevance.

What often happens with works of art that fail on the esthetic level is that they fix our attention on their subject-matter to a degree that would not be probable were they a greater success, as if in this way compensating for their major defects. This is true of Mr. West's book. The subject matter which saturates his novel and forces our attention is present-day England, and the atmosphere created gives the book its special gloom. Mr. West could not have concocted such a peculiar and sad story unless he had deeply felt it in the material he was writing about. And it *is* there. I don't know if Americans are finally lucky or unlucky to be what they are, but it would not hurt many of

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us to read this book for extra-literary reasons.

With the stereotype of a former England persisting in our minds, it is hard to imagine that the threadbare, skimpy, almost helpless group of people moving through the pages of this book are contemporary Englishmen. That, rather than the author's mismanaged plot, is the real shock and point of *Another Kind.* It is never a particularly pleasant thing to watch a once-great nation go under, and it is more depressing to be told that these conditions are the norm today in most of Europe. Neither happiness nor prosperity is around any corner for the people in Mr. West's book, and by showing this as plainly as he does he performs a gloomy public service. This kind of truth will not set anyone free, I am afraid, but it takes the edge off the novel's artistic failure and gives us something in its place. It also makes us think more highly of Anthony West.

Odyssey of Seven Jews

WALLS ARE CRUMBLING: Seven Jewish Philosophers Find Christ. By John M. Oesterreicher. Devin-Adair. $5.

By DONALD McDONALD

FATHER OESTERREICHER set himself a formidable task when he undertook to trace the personal progress of seven modern Jewish philosophers toward Christianity. The peculiar internal difficulty of his undertaking is the same as that confronting the novelist. For, like the novelist, the biographer can probe the human soul and the soul's movement only up to the point which, for his purpose and for the readers' benefit, is the critical point—the point where the super-life of grace has been offered and accepted.

Neither novelist nor biographer, nor for that matter the beneficiary himself can reveal the experience of grace in terms of natural causality, even while affirming its reality. And so, it was undoubtedly inability rather than "reticence" which moved Edith Stein when "asked about the steps that led to her conversion . . . to say, 'Heart, keep thy secret, heart keep thy secret.'" And of Max Picard, another of Father Oesterreicher's subjects, the author relates: "When I visited him . . . at his home in Caslano and asked him to tell me a little of his way to Christ and to the Church, 'I can't do it,' was all his reserve let him answer."

Confronted by such mystery the biographer can only do what Father Oesterreicher has done—record the externalizations; in this case, the developments of philosophical thought which led seven Jewish philosophers to a recognition of objective truth in an age of skepticism and atheism. But such an account delineates philosophical, not religious, experience. Each of these Jewish philosophers, it is true, accepted Christ, either formally and with the concrete public manifestation of Baptism, or privately and with reserved intentionality. However, in the account of each of these philosophers (Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, Adolf Reinach, Max Scheler, Paul Landsberg, Max Picard and Edith Stein) there is no discernible causal link between their philosophical experience and their religious conversion.

I think this point must be insisted upon because it is upon religious grounds and in a selected context that Father Oesterreicher has written his book. The book is valuable for its philosophical exposition (though some of this is uneven and rough going) and for the insights of some of the subjects: Max Picard's observations on Nazism, for example, and his views of the noise and intellectual discontinuity of the modern world which militate against contemplative silence.

But this is not why Father Oesterreicher labored with so much obvious love and care. Father Oesterreicher wanted to do two things: he wanted to show that the walls which separate Jews from Christ are crumbling; and he wanted to defend them from the charge that: "Jews lack the power of spiritual thought, they are to blame for the destructive philosophies of materialism."

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However, the odyssey of each of these Jewish philosophers is not a peculiar Jew-to-Christian philosophical movement. The philosophy of each was not a Jewish philosophy which became Christian. Rather, it was a movement from skepticism and incertitude to certitude and the absolute. But, as such, a similar book could have been assembled to record the similar philosophical experiences of many philosophers, Jewish or Gentile. Thus, at crucial points in each biographical sketch, it is necessary for Father Oesterreicher himself to interpolate and to speak for his subjects on such things as Judaism and its fulfillment in the New Testament and Christianity. These interpolations are valuable, but as a revelation of the sensitive and intelligent mind of the author, not of his subjects. They are commentary, not biography.

Where philosophical knowledge ends and religious wisdom begins in the heart of man is still a mystery. And Israel is still a mystery; the walls between Jews and Christ may indeed be crumbling. But I do not believe this book, for all its other virtues, demonstrates the destruction of the walls or penetrates the mystery. Perhaps there will be no dramatic destruction of the walls, only the solitary and laborious scaling of those walls by individual Jews who, when they reach the top, will possess the unutterable secret.

No End In Sight

DOTING. By Henry Green. Viking. $3.

By FRANCIS X. DUGGAN

MR. Green's new novel revolves around the minor intrigues of a middle-aged couple, a middle-aged male friend, and two young women. Various relationships exist among the five, in varying degrees of intimacy. There is much talk of seduction—though little of the actuality—a bit of comic jealousy, and general double-dealing all around. And when the book ends we are given to understand that the story goes on and on.

At one point it looks as though a serious theme is being developed.

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Arthur Middleton says: "To my mind love must include adoration of course, but if you just dote on a girl you don't necessarily go so far as to love her. Loving goes deeper." The words, however, are not the statement of any theme: they merely describe the activity that preoccupies the characters through the course of the novel.

Green's style is slightly reminiscent of Waugh's early work—*A Handful of Dust,* for instance—though perhaps only in the sharp dialogue in which things not spoken are said and unasked questions are answered. But Green's work is not satire, however close the resemblance. His characters are engaged in a sort of futility, but his work contains none of the extensive implications of Waugh's commentary on the futile preoccupations of modern existence. It is particularized, and centers rather on the comic intrigues of these people in this situation. I do not mean to condemn Green for not being a Waugh: that is obviously not his intention. I mention Waugh merely for contrast, in the hope of delimiting some of the qualities of Green's work. It is not satire, but a sly burlesque. And when, as the novel ends, Green tells us: "The next day they all went on very much the same," he is not expanding his theme; he is merely extending the joke.

His style is swift, in his brief descriptions as well as in dialogue: so much so that it occasionally takes the reader by surprise — as, for example, when he writes: "Upon which the act beneath which they'd ceased to watch, came to a close in thin applause." Once or twice it seems as if the book has devolved into a series of swiftly changing staged scenes, quite dexterously managed, but bordering close upon monotony. However, that such a structure, and a method that restricts itself almost wholly to dialogue, do avoid becoming monotonous, is its own commentary on the author's skill.

But here, I think, we come upon the chief failing in Green's work. The scintillating quality so much admired in his writing when it first began to appear in this country must have come by now to be recognized as a surface thing which has worn with the novelty of Green's appeal. This latest work, *Doting,* though not quite so mirthful and sparkling as *Loving,* is deftly done. There is the same agile conversation, the same quickly moving plot with its neat turns and subdued hilarity. But we wonder at this very dexterity. The whole thing is just a bit too facile, and the facility has often an air of existing for its own sake: as if Green is perhaps as much interested in the neat accomplishment of clever dialogue as in what the dialogue does.

Three Levels of Melville

MELVILLE'S QUARREL WITH GOD. By Lawrence Thompson. Princeton University. $6.

By GEOFFREY STONE

IN his "Note to the Reader" Mr. Thompson explains the basic inspiration of this book. He was reading *Moby Dick* when it was suddenly given to him that Melville wrote on three levels of meaning—one for the hasty superficial reader, one for the orthodox (orthodox, that is, relative to Melville's nineteenth century milieu) reader looking for conventional moralizing, and one for Milville himself and a few of the elect.

The intention on the deepest level was blasphemy and the ironical treatment of Calvinist Christianity. All ironical fiction is, of course, written on these three levels: there is the simple action of the story, and the other two levels are provided by the author's tongue-in-cheek comment. To Mr. Thompson's amazement, when he looked for the three levels, almost everything Melville had done proved to be written in "triple-talk" (Mr. Thompson has an embarrassing professorial fondness for the vulgar tongue: Melville is constantly being "naughty"; Ahab does a fan dance; the theater and cards get mixed up with talk of playing it "straight" as against playing it "crooked").

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With this to go on, Mr. Thompson has written as ingenious an exegesis of Melvillian allegory as has been done since William S. Gleim some years ago demonstrated that *Moby Dick* was an exercise in crypto-Swedenborgianism. What makes it all the more distressing is that he is right a good part of the time. Melville no doubt was, as Mr. Thompson says, bitterly resentful of the world as he found it and extended his resentment to the God he held responsible for a creation antipathetic to human aspiration.

Revolting against the Calvinism in which he had been brought up, he yet could not escape the generally Manichaean disposition of mind fostered by Calvinism, and against the evil of creation and its Author he took the Romantic stance of proud but hopeless defiance. Mr. Thompson is not concerned to examine this "religious idiom" except so far as it gave rise to Melville's "artistic idiom"—his "triple talk." Triple-talk being the ironic method itself, and Melville being a frequent ironist, Mr. Thompson is able to offer a good many undeniable examples of it; but so fascinated is he with his key to Melville's meaning that he insists on opening all sorts of doors that simply aren't there.

Since Mr. Thompson's explication must of necessity be almost three times as long as any passage of Melville's he cites, there isn't space to give a life-sized example of his method of analysis. I can merely note that when Melville speaks of Captain Vere's and Billy Budd's "each radically sharing in the rarer qualities of one nature," the phrase is adduced as one more proof of Mr. Thompson's contention that Vere represents God and Billy, man, and that God shares in the guilt for which He has arbitrarily condemned man.

When I first read the phrase, I thought it referred to Vere's and Billy's possessing some of the less usual qualities of a common human nature, and after reading Mr. Thompson's portly volume it still has the same meaning for me.

You can't however, "refute" an argument of Mr. Thompson's sort—no more than you can challenge the

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eristic of a believer in British Israel or a man who holds that the measurements of the Great Pyramid reveal things about the lost continent of Mu. You must throw off your "prejudices," Mr. Thompson says, to see what he sees, looking through what he says were Melville's prejudices.

What do you see? I, for one, who never supposed that Melville's writings represented a Christian view of the human condition (a presumption Mr. Thompson finds even the Freudian critics making), see Melville reduced to a man of not-too-acute perceptions who covered them with verbal arabesques of such intricacy that no one had much notion of what he was saying until Mr. Thompson chanced on the fact of triple-talk. The multiplicity of reference, the recognition of the ambiguity of most human thought, feeling, and action that are present in great fiction disappear, and again I am left wondering what it was that Melville did to merit all this painstaking inquiry.

But let Mr. Thompson have the praise that is his due. He has avoided the genetic fallacy and allowed that a man's theological concerns are not to be explained only on another level of experience—infantile resentments, unrecognized sexual frustrations, maladjustment to some social circumstance. While he has quite properly admitted that Melville was nothing exceptional as a philosopher, he has laid stress on a fact that the more recent searchers after the facts of Melville's life sometimes overlook, and this is that Melville was a metaphysical novelist who sought dramatic expression for mind's mountains and cliffs of fall. If Mr. Thompson has shown Melville doing this with a humanly implausible elaborateness and consistency, that too is one of the hazards of thinking.

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of Irish literature, Dr. Kelly has sketched, in three hundred and twenty pages, those noble tales of Cuchulain and Fionn which have persisted to this day as sources of literary inspiration: the Golden Age of Irish culture, its downfall, its smouldering, and, finally, its gradual rekindling to what is known as the Irish Renaissance.

But, not limiting herself to a survey, she has also sought those distinctive marks by which an Irish literature might be identified in any age. Motivated by Professor Corkery and Stopford Brooke she feels that nationalism and an acute consciousness of the spiritual are the most distinctive of these. And it is, presumably, because she does not find these forces predominant in modern Irish writing that she says "the so-called Renaissance . . . is not in any true sense either Irish or a real renaissance."

Her dual purpose is only cumbersomely synchronized. Such awkwardness inevitably results that, for instance, Kickham appears in one place as "a genuinely Irish novelist" and in another as merely one of those Irish novelists whose novels were "in reality an enlargement of the field of English fiction." This awkwardness is further apparent in the manner in which Catholicism becomes a critical criterion; Dr. Kelly holds, for example, that the early Irish novelists' failure to understand the people was owing to their Protestant status. It may, too, be attributable to this thematic difficuly that the third of the book which treats of the writers of the twentieth century does not even mention Darrell Figgis, Peadar O'Donnell, Seumas MacManus, Patrick Kavanagh, or Walter Macken, to name but a few.

Serious readers will demand more concern with literary art as such, the inclusion of a bibliography, and the correction of the index which, otherwise excellent, is inaccurate in its references. Despite these criticisms the book deserves a wide circulation. Aside from de Blacam's *First Book,* which is much briefer, no other work essays the same breadth or makes available to a growing, interested audience a survey of Irish literature.

Laughter Mixed with Woe

FULL OF LIFE. By John Fante. Little, Brown. $2.75.

By JOE DEVER

JOHN FANTE is a powerful autobiographical writer who is also a very successful Hollywood scenario concocter. He really should be better known as a serious writer able to evoke the human comedy wisely and pungently out of an earthy Italian-American background which was centered largely in Denver and San Juan, California.

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Yet, autobiographical writing is dangerous, over the long run, because there are only so many veins to a mine. This will be Mr. Fante's problem in the future, as is now manifest in the desperate retrogression of Mr. Saroyan. Good autobiographical writing is worth the risk of ultimate dryness, however; time cannot mellow reprintable material, and when the literary coffin is opened, there is the smell of good earth and fresh air.

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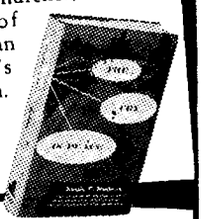

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By MAX FISCHER

JUST a century ago Sir Edward Creasy published a book, *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World,* which

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over the years has fascinated many readers. Mr. Hoare, an English social worker and school teacher, born of missionary parents in China, thought very highly of this book and decided that the battles were important only because the military decisions led to the preservation, the spread or the extinction of certain ideas or ideals. Therefore he thought it proper to write about the books which deal with the ideas and ideals that have made history. He compiled a list of books which he regarded as the most influential in world history and lived long enough only to finish a manuscript about the first eight books on the list of twenty-five. While it was still at the publishers Mr. Hoare died.

The idea of organizing the intellectual history of mankind around great books is certainly not new on this side of the Atlantic. The Great Books Foundation and other organizations have popularized this approach to the history of civilization, and it has proved to be notably successful in adult education. Several commentaries on the great books have been published in this country —the best of which is *The Great Books: A Christian Appraisal,* edited in four volumes by Harold C. Gardiner, S.J.

While this and similar works are symposia, Hoare intended his volumes to represent the comprehensive viewpoint of just one author, himself. The other books about books are centered around the appreciation of single volumes as works of thought or art, but Hoare's special interest is in the books' influence on contemporary movements, and on the cultural and social problems of our day, especially the present contest between the "two worlds." This explains his preoccupation with works that have had an impact on political history and his disinterest in books whose importance is limited to their intrinsic artistic merit.

The books selected for Mr. Hoare's first volume are of the pre-Christian era. Mr. Hoare planned to treat the New Testament in the first chapter of a second series. His one completed volume deals with eminent works of the ancient civilizations of Babylonia (The Law of Hammurabi), Egypt (The Book of the Dead), Israel (The Thora), India (The Laws of Manu), and China (Confucius). It is characteristic that Lao-Tse and Buddha are not included. Greek civilization is represented in three chapters dealing with four books: the *Iliad,* the *Odyssey,* Plato's *Republic,* and Aristotle's *Politics.*

Hoare is a vivid writer with a remarkably rounded knowledge of facts, so his work is stimulating; but one has the feeling that the author sometimes lost his footing in secure facts and got too involved in lofty hypotheses.

Ancient Days

THE USES OF THE PAST: Profiles of Former Societies. By Herbert J. Muller. Oxford University Press. $5.50.

By N. S. TIMASHEFF

THE author of this book, a professor of English at Purdue University, is now lecturing at Istanbul (Constantinople). This is why the book begins with somewhat impressionistic reflections provoked by the sight of Hagia Sophia, formerly the greatest cathedral of Eastern Christendom. In the course of these reflections the *leitmotif* of the book appears: the universal failure of religion.

There follow two chapters devoted to the understanding of history as a science—after all, the purpose of the book is to derive some useful lessons from the study of the past. It appears that, despite his negative view on the usefulness of religion, the author does not subscribe to the thesis of the determinists. The time may have been ripe, he says, for such adventurers as Alexander, Mahomet, Jenghiz Kahn or Lenin, but their success was not inevitable. Therefore, "the fantastic course of history" is impredictable.

Professor Muller often confronts his views with those of Spengler, Toynbee and Sorokin (whom he rather mixes up), sometimes also with those of Christopher Dawson and Kroeber. He obviously prefers the last one who finds in cultural

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history "nothing cyclical, regular, repetitive or necessary." At some places he takes Toynbee to task and rather convincingly shows that, despite his great erudition, the great English historian arbitrarily breaks continuous developments into parts to make them fit into his scheme; this is especially true of Byzantine and Chinese history.

The bulk of the book consists of "profiles of the past," or in studies of individual civilizations. The emphasis here is on the moral point of view: why one or another civilization provided men with happiness; he especially wants to know what were the contributions of religion.

The sequence of "profiles" covers Israel, classical Greece, early Christianity (with excursions into the present), imperial Rome, the Middle Ages (and the aftermath, Renaissance, Reformation, the age of Enlightenment), Russia, both Byzantine and Marxian, and finally the East, especially India and China. The chapter on Christianity is, naturally, entirely inacceptable; the author, approaching the problem from the point of view of radical Protestantism, denies the divinity of Jesus Christ. The chapter on Russia is also quite inadequate; according to the author, "there is no questioning the sincerity of Lenin's desire to keep the revolution democratic." On the contrary there is no doubt that Lenin, whose mind was molded not only by Marx but also by extreme Russian revolutionists, never cared for democracy. Much better is the chapter on the East, especially on India. Professor Muller is convincing when tearing to pieces Northrup's reduction of the opposition between the West and the East to the difference between the intellectual and esthetic (intuitive) approach to reality. He stresses the many schools of thought which emerged in India when debating the nature of spiritual reality which, according to Northrup, must be given to the Eastern mind in immediate experience.

Having finished his "profiles," Professor Muller wants to draw a conclusion. But he has none to offer. As to immediate prospects, he is pessimistic: the odds favor the catastrophe of a Third World War. In the long range, there is still some hope, so long as the Western world continues to hold the ideal of spiritual freedom and equality. To this hope, he says, Christianity can lend strong support. But, for him, it does not constitute "our best hope." His best hope is a rather vague combination of some ideas put forth by Toynbee and Reinhold Niebuhr.

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CATHOLICISM AND THE WORLD TODAY. By Dom Aelred Graham. David McKay. $3.

By JAMES V. MULLANEY

THIS book was written ". . . to explore those regions of thought where Catholicism impinges on Western civilization, influences it, and is in turn acted on by it." Among the problems discussed in it are Communism, the problems of freedom and authority, the relation between the individual and society, faith and reason, science and religion, institutionalism and mysticism, the historical Christ and contemporary Christianity, the reunion

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of Christendom.

Dom Aelred Graham writes urbanely. He succeeds admirably in avoiding "special pleading," and that is an achievement. He is equally successful in another of his aims —to avoid the drawing of any conclusions, and that is a somewhat more dubious achievement. It is, however, the defect of an indefinitely civilized mind with a great gift for sympathetic entry into divergent intellectual positions. To try to render the non-Catholic position intelligible to the Catholic, and the Catholic position intelligible to the non-Catholic, with unfailing courtesy, honesty and intelligence is no mean aim.

The book suffers from a structural defect—lack of unity. The author is not writing about Catholicism or about the world today from any special vantage point; he is writing rather about every point of contact between them. That is to say he is writing a brief book about the whole of reality. This is courageous, but is it advisable? The result is a book without organization, a series of unconnected discussions about every problem of modern man. There is no single insight to unify these disparate discussions.

It is rare that a tender heart and a tough mind are found in the same person. There is no doubt that Dom Aelred Graham has the first.

REVIEWERS

Seymour Krim is a New York critic who has written for the Hudson Review and other literary publications.

Donald McDonald is a member of the editorial staff of the Catholic Messenger, Davenport, Iowa.

Francis X. Duggan before going on active duty with the Marines was a member of the English department at Notre Dame.

Geoffrey Stone is the author of "Melville," a volume in Sheed and Ward's Great Writers of the World Series.

Eloin McKiernan teaches at Genesco Teachers College in New York.

Joe Dever is a Boston short-story writer and novelist.

N. S. Timasheff is a member of the Fordham faculty.

James V. Mullaney teaches at Manhattan College.

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YES, IT WAS A SATISFACTORY SPRING--

and now we have got everything safely published, even Father F. X. Murphy's **A MONUMENT TO ST. JEROME** ($4.50) which was very tiresome about its production—very appropriate of it, as we gather St. Jerome could be pretty tiresome himself, in fact he ought to be the patron saint of all short-tempered scholars. One of the essays in the book, The Irascible Hermit, is about this side of him, others discuss him as an historian, as a humanist, as an exegete, etc., so that this large and learned man appears as the many-sided person he was.

Continuing backwards through our Spring list, **WILLINGLY TO SCHOOL** by Dom Hubert van Zeller ($3.25) goes on demonstrating why all future spiritual writers should be educated at Downside: if they survive, they'll do. The only people who are less than enthusiastic about it are school masters and if you have read the book you will easily understand this.

A SUMMARY OF MORAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY by Henry Davis, S.J. ($5.00) need not even be seen to be loved: just tell a priest it exists and he wants it at once. Father Davis himself says that laymen who want to get some notion of canon law might well read it, too. We couldn't agree more—it is pleasant to find that the laws of the Church are, after all, the essence of common sense.

Of the March books we have a special weakness for **ST. BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE** by Agnes de la Gorce ($3.00). St. Benedict, unlike us, went in for a shiningly clean soul in a dirty body, instead of the other way on. He is a perfect patron saint for "Displaced persons" (who heaven knows could use one) and a lesson to us that we can save our souls even without a hot bath.

In **CHRIST IN THE LITURGY** Dom Illtyd Trethowan ($2.50) argues against himself for a vernacular liturgy—he obviously dislikes the idea so intensely that we finished the chapter not sure which side he had converted us to. This would be a good Ordination gift, by the way, and so would that **SUMMARY OF MORAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY** and also Bishop Heenan's **THE PEOPLE'S PRIEST** ($2.75). This is not just our idea, at least one Bishop is giving it to the new priests being ordained in his diocese this year.

The current Trumpet has a page of reviews on the **SATAN** book ($5.00) and another on Maisie Ward's **RETURN TO CHESTERTON** ($4.50), all from such papers as the "New York Times" and "Time": we never saw such a flood of enthusiasm as those two books produced in the secular press. If you are one of the few **Commonweal** readers who don't see the Trumpet, remedy this error—send a postcard to Lucy MacGill and she will see you get it, free and postpaid. Yes, we have a number of other books published this Spring, and the Trumpet is where you will find them—we have only room here to mention that if you are going to the Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona, you will find it well worth while to take along a copy of Carlton Hayes' **THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN** ($2.75).

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